

# Getting workers to jobs

**K**eeping people on the move is another major factor in sustaining Wisconsin's economic growth. Whether for daily commutes or weekly business travel, the state needs quality passenger services to meet the needs of a growing economy.

Wisconsin's multimodal transportation system allows hassle-free commute times that rank among the best in the nation and the lowest in the Great Lakes region. In 2000, the average Wisconsin worker needed only 20.1 minutes to travel to or from work, compared to a national average of 24.3 minutes.

## Keeping the drive easy

The vast majority of Wisconsin workers commute by auto, whether alone (80%) or in a car pool (10%). The state needs to keep its network of highways and streets free from congestion and in good condition to allow safe, consistent and competitive travel times, especially in metropolitan areas where jobs are centered.

While the average Wisconsin worker enjoys quick driving times, the average commute time did increase by 10% between 1990 and 2000. This trend may need to be watched carefully in coming years to ensure that congestion does not reduce worker productivity.

“It was a challenge to locate where we could accommodate our employees,” says Jeffrey Clark, president of Production Stamping, a metal-stamper in Milwaukee.

With low unemployment in Milwaukee, it was critical to hang onto the 55-person work force, most of which lives in the inner city, with close to half commuting by public transportation. “One site we looked at was not on the main bus line. Bus service fell off at non-peak hours, which would have made shift-work difficult,” says Clark. “We chose the one available site that improved our employees’ commute time.”

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[www.bizsites.com/psl/f199/commute.html](http://www.bizsites.com/psl/f199/commute.html)

## Public transit meets needs of workers

Public transportation is an essential mode for many hourly workers and others to access job sites. There are 68 communities in Wisconsin with public transit or shared-ride taxi service. According to the US Census Bureau, about 45,000 people use public transit to get to work every day, and thousands more use transit for trips to school, shopping, special events or other destinations.

Programs like the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program help match public transit services and the specific needs of workers and employers.

## Walking and bicycling offer alternatives

Even in our cold-weather state, over 90,000 people walk or bicycle to work every day in Wisconsin. By investing in safe and attractive bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the state and local communities can help encourage commuting by these modes.



## Keeping business travelers in motion

In addition to people commuting to work, the state's transportation system also supports trips made for a variety of business travel needs. Every day, thousands of employees travel to sales calls, meetings, conventions, or to visit off-site job locations.

Wisconsin's highway system, and especially the Corridors 2020 network, allows business travelers easy access between major communities. Highways link to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Chicago and other Midwest metropolitan areas. It is important to keep these routes free from congestion, so that business travel times are predictable, and so that motorists arrive at their destinations free from stress.

## Trains offer a comfortable travel option

The state also supports Amtrak's *Hiawatha Service* passenger route. With six daily round trips and a trip time of just 92 minutes, the train offers what is probably the shortest trip time between Milwaukee and downtown Chicago of any mode. Over 420,000 people use this service every year.

Future plans call for extension of passenger rail service to more Wisconsin communities, with high-quality trains, frequent departures, and top speeds of 110 MPH!



## Airports help business travel take off

The availability of commercial and private air travel are key factors for businesses considering new site locations. Wisconsin serves business travelers with nine airports offering commercial flights, with over 4.6 million passengers boarding in 2000.

Wisconsin has nearly 700 aircraft landing facilities to serve corporate and general aviation. More than 1,100 general aviation aircraft in Wisconsin are registered to corporations doing business in the state.



Aid Association for Lutherans flies an average of 500 people in and out of Outagamie Airport each month, said Sally Klapper-Randa, director of corporate travel for the Appleton-based insurer. Although generally pleased with service at the airport, "we've all noticed it's become more and more crowded," she said.

On the whole, local business and government leaders say the airport management has done a good job of expanding the facility to keep pace with air traffic growth.

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